

TRANSNATIONAL WORKING GROUP ON THE DYNAMICS OF CONFLICT

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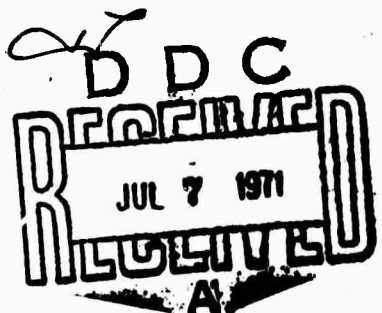
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SUMMARY

^e This report summarizes the research activities of a group of thirteen experimental social psychologists, from U. S. and European universities, who are informally confederated for the purpose of investigating conflict between individuals and small groups. New results are reported for the following topics:

(1) The nature of cooperation and competition: Factor analyses of results from a bargaining study conducted at eight different laboratories show that what it means to be cooperative vs. competitive varies from one sample to another. This is exceedingly important because person's ratings of their cooperativeness, made before the interaction, proves rather consistently to be a good predictor of how the conflict relationship will evolve. The analyses suggest that there are two main patterns of meaning given cooperation. In some cases, it is best defined by "good-bad" or an evaluative dimension; in other cases, it is best defined by "active-passive" and "strong-weak" or a dynamism dimension. The implication seems to be that cooperation is primarily a matter of intention in the first instance (to produce a good relationship) and a matter of strategy or procedure in the second (to be compliant and yielding). This points to the desirability of distinguishing different kinds of cooperators and identifying their assumptions about and approaches to conflict situations and their reactions to different patterns of aggression and competitiveness.

(2) The basis of ingroup-outgroup conflict: A new experimental procedure has shown that differential behavior toward one's "ingroup" vs. an "outgroup" can be elicited by exceedingly small distinctions between the two. Even when the distinction between one's own group and the other is very minimal (e.g., the two "groups" are categorized only in terms of systematic differences between them on a simple number perception task), there was a sizable tendency for persons to show favoritism toward other members of their own group. (The measure of favoritism involved the distribution of small amounts of money among the members of the two groups.) This result indicates that ingroup-outgroup distinctions are drawn very quickly, at least within the subject populations of the first experiment, which has further implications concerning the susceptibility of these subjects to the development of intergroup conflict.

(3) The effect of within-group relations or intergroup conflict: Pilot experiments have been conducted on the effect of homogeneity vs. heterogeneity of attitudes within a group upon its relations with another group with which it is in a conflict relationship. The pilot studies, conducted in different laboratories produced different results, with initial heterogeneity serving to weaken internal cohesiveness in one case but seeming to strengthen it in the other. A further study is being conducted on this problem.

1. Research on information acquisition under conflict.

The enclosed report by Claude Flament (C. Flament, Representation dans une situation conflictuelle: Étude interculturelle. Psychologie Française, 1967, 12, 297-304.) provides a brief report of the experiment on information acquisition conducted at Louvain, Aix-en-Provence, UCLA, and Dartmouth College. A fuller report which will provide more details of the data and theoretical interpretation of the results is being prepared by John Lanzetta and Claude Flament.

In April, 1968, Flament and Kelley, along with one of Flament's young colleagues at Aix-en-Provence, Jean-Claude Abric, planned a further experiment on this topic. This study is intended to follow-up the unexpected finding that in the four samples of the original study, some subjects were characterized by a "social interaction" orientation to the relationship while others were characterized by a "profit" orientation. The major dimension of individual difference in orientation to the negotiation relationship was that of "social interaction" at Aix and UCLA while the major dimension of individual difference was that of "profit" at Louvain and Dartmouth. More specifically, individuals at the first two sights varied primarily in the degree to which they treated their partner on a contingent basis, being helpful to him if he was helpful to them. In the second two samples, at Louvain and Dartmouth, all subjects behaved in a highly contingent manner and the main dimension of individual difference was the degree to which they acted simply to maximize their own profits as opposed to being generous toward the other person.

The experiment planned by Flament, Kelley, and Abric will attempt experimentally to vary the major dimensions of individual difference in approach to the conflict interaction. Thus, one set of subjects will be induced to view the relationship in terms of a contingent or non-contingent orientation and another, to view it in terms of high profit or generous (low profit) terms. This will be attempted first with subjects at Aix, where the typical orientation is the former. If successful, the procedure will be replicated at Dartmouth or Louvain where the typical stance is the latter. The purpose of this study (which is also closely related to the preceding topic) is to gain insight into the different orientations by means of attempting experimentally to control them.

2. "International" bargaining experiment.

Accompanying this report are copies of a rough draft by Kelley, Shure, Deutsch, Faucheux, Lanzetta, Moscovici, Nuttin, Rabbie, and Thibaut entitled "An experimental-comparative study of negotiation behavior." This draft constitutes approximately one-third of the full report of the eight-laboratory study of bargaining which has been the object of continuing effort during the last eight months. The experiment deals with bargaining behavior under various experimental conditions (high vs. low incentives; equal vs. unequal dependence) as exhibited by subjects from the eight laboratories. The general procedure and results of the study were described in Technical Report No. 1 and the procedure and a small portion of results are described in detail in the enclosed report.

In addition to the results described earlier, some new outcomes of a factor analysis are reported in the enclosed working paper by Shure and Barefoot entitled "Individual and site differences in the Nice experiment" (inasmuch as this experiment was planned at our Nice meeting some years ago, it is referred to within the group as the Nice experiment). This factor analysis yields an important result concerning the meaning or definition of the cooperation-competition dimension within the different samples. In some cases (most clearly exemplified by the Paris and Dartmouth samples) it is equivalent to a "good-bad" or evaluative dimension. In others (best illustrated by the Columbia and North Carolina samples), it corresponds to an "active-passive" and "strong-weak" or dynamism factor. The point of this is that the meaning of cooperation vs. competition varies from sample to sample and there seem to be two predominant meanings which roughly correspond to the first factors in the Semantic Differential (Osgood, et al., 1958). This is a finding of very great potential importance inasmuch as person's self-ratings and expectations of each other on the scale "cooperative-competitive" is usually one of the best pre-interaction predictions of how the conflict situation will be resolved. The analysis provided by Shure and Barefoot suggests that a distinction must be made between cooperation (or competition) as a tactic and cooperation (or competition) as intent. When the cooperative-competitive scale is associated with the dynamic factor alone, it implies that the subject plans to play the game in either a passive, weak, cowardly, foolish manner (if he rates himself as cooperative), or in an active, strong, brave, and wise manner (if he rates himself as competitive). In short, it is an indication of how "tough" a strategy he plans to follow. Those subjects who associate the scale with the evaluative dimension, however, do not appear to be associating the scale with any particular strategy. If they rate themselves as cooperative, they are approaching the game with moral, honest, and peaceful intent. If they rate themselves as competitive, the opposite is true.

It is our plan during the coming year to analyze this result more carefully and develop hypotheses about the source of the difference and its consequences. We will then plan further experiments on this important problem.

3. The basis of ingroup-outgroup conflict.

Tajfel has begun work during the past period on the minimal basis of differential behavior toward ingroups (to which the person belongs) and outgroups. Because much conflict is generated by such distinctions and grows out of behavioral favoritism shown toward the ingroup, this topic is basic to much of our other work on conflict processes.

The aim of the experiment designed by Tajfel is to investigate the effects of certain types of categorisation of people on inter-group behavior. The main idea is to employ categorisations which are not based either on face-to-face interaction or on any instrumental value of group membership. For these reasons, anonymity of subjects was maintained. Two main conditions were introduced. In both, the first part of the experiment consisted in

the subjects estimating the number of dots in clusters shown at rapid exposure. In one condition, the subjects were divided into two equal groups on the basis of different "styles" of performance, i.e., tendency towards under or over-estimation without any implication of differences in quality of performance. In the second condition, the division was in terms of "superior" and "inferior" performance.

In the second part of the experiment the subjects worked individually and in isolation from one another on matrices each consisting of several terms. Each of these terms (elements of the matrices) is in the form of a fraction, the numerator and denominator of which award a certain number of points. The subject's task was to choose one of these terms in each of the matrices. All choices are for points (worth money) to be awarded to other subjects. Three types of choice were introduced: between two individuals from the subject's own group; between two individuals from the other group; and between one individual from the subject's own and one from the other group. It is the third type of choice which is crucial to the experiment.

Tajfel's results are summarized in the attached report which he presented at our last general conference at Timber Cove, Ft. Ross, California. Tajfel's results, based on 16 subjects in each of the four conditions, show a strikingly strong favoritism for members of one's own category in all four conditions. These results are dramatic inasmuch as they suggest how minimal are the conditions under which it is possible for there to develop ingroup cohesiveness and hostility toward the outgroup. Because of the basic significance of this result, a special subcommittee of the Working Group has been formed to plan further research on this phenomenon and they will plan a standard study to be replicated in several of the laboratories.

4. The effect of within-group relations upon intergroup relations.

Here we are concerned with groups in which sharp distinctions between the ingroup and the outgroup have been made, whether for such reasons as are manifested in the research just described above, or for other reasons. The research focuses upon the effect of conflict within a group upon its relations with the outgroup. This topic was selected at our Sorrento meeting as one to be a major focus of theoretical analysis and research activities during the coming years.

During the past six months, Thibaut and Rabbie constituted a special subgroup which had the assignment of developing an experimental procedure to study this problem. They met in March and planned pilot experiments which were then run and reported to the total Working Group at the Timber Cove conference. Their experimental variables were (1) homogeneity vs. heterogeneity of attitudes within each group and (2) whether the group's representative (for an intergroup conference) was unquestionably reliable and loyal or not. The two pilot experiments, the one at North Carolina and the other at Utrecht produced rather different results, particularly as regarding the weakening or strengthening effect of initial within-group heterogeneity of attitudes. This tended to break up the group and create attraction toward

the opposing group in the North Carolina experiment but to make for a better image of one's own group (though also a better attitude toward the outgroup) in the Utrecht study.

The two experimental procedures that were used in the pilot studies have now been combined into one procedure and a common experiment will be conducted during the coming months at both North Carolina and Utrecht. Depending on the results of this comparison, the procedure will either be further revised, in order to enable clarification of the discrepancies, or will be conducted in its present format at several additional sites. Other members of the Working Group most actively interested in this problem are Lanzetta, Mulder, and Pruitt. In addition, there is a general commitment within the group to conduct replications or variations of this important study.

5. Timber Cove Meeting

The Working Group met from September 3 to September 7 at Timber Cove Lodge, Ft. Ross, California. In addition to discussions of the research projects outlined above, there were discussions of (a) the methodology of cross-national research, (b) development of a second procedure for the experimental study of the effect of intergroup relations upon intergroup attitudes and behavior, and (c) a lengthy theoretical analysis of relationships between ingroups and outgroups. The latter discussion was more general than the more specific discussions on the same topic which arose in connection with planning the specific experiments. The general discussion constituted an attempt to outline the various ways in which relationships among subgroups within a given system affect the interaction between that system and other competing outgroups.

A highlight of the Timber Cove meeting was a presentation by Thomas C. Schelling on the topic "Ingredients for an ecological segregation theory." This was a close examination of the consequences of variations in individual preferences for the pattern of segregation within a population.

Attachments

Flament, C. Representation dans une situation conflictuelle: Étude inter-culturelle. Psychologie Française, 1967, 12, 297-304.

Kelley, H. H., Shure, G. H., Deutsch, M., Faucheux, C., Lanzetta, J. T., Moscovitch, S., Nuttin, J. M., Jr., Rabbie, J. M., & Thibaut, J. W. An experimental-comparative study of negotiation behavior. 1968, (First draft).

Shure, G. H. & Brefoot, J. C. Individual and site differences in the Nice experiment. 1968, (Working paper).

Tajfel, H. The effects of certain types of categorization upon inter-group behavior. Tables.